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The necessity of protecting
the sabbath, in cities and

TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.—No. 5.

THE NECESSITY

OF

PROTECTING THE SABBATH,

IN CITIES AND IN THE COUNTRY, FROM

DESECRATION:

ESPECIALLY FROM THAT

PERNICIOUS FORM AND CAUSE OF ITS PROFANATION,

THE

SUNDAY LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

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THE TEMPTATIONS OF CITY LIFE.

First Visit to the City in Pursuit of a new Home and Fortune.—A Crisis in Human Life.—Friendly Solicitude for Young Men in large Towns, as being in Circumstances of distinguished Promise and Peril.—Temptations arising from an Exchange of accustomed for strange and ever-changing Scenes, denying to Virtue the Succor of the Known and Familiar.—Temptations arising from the Want of the Conservative Influences of Home, the Divinely-appointed and natural Defence of Virtue.—Temptations arising from a prevailing Over-Estimate of Wealth, and fraudulent Methods of Business, impairing the Sensitiveness and Strength of Conscience, and the Foundations of Integrity, and removing a principal Barrier to general Immorality.—Temptations arising from Diversified Examples of Wickedness in apparent Impunity and Triumph, impairing Confidence in the Reality of a Moral Government, and thus removing a powerful Restraint from precipitant Passions.—Temptations arising from specific Appeals to particular Passions and Weaknesses of Human Nature, surprising dormant and latent Depravity into formidable Manifestation and Activity.—Temptations arising from the concealed Character of City Life, precluding the Rebuke or Knowledge of Friends, or any amenable Relation to the Community, and fostering the corrupting Delusion of a twofold Atheism—a Feeling of not being accountable to God or Man.—Triumphing over these united Temptations, a Youth may rise to a Destiny of unrivalled Glory: falling before them, he may sink to a Doom of unparalleled Infamy and Misery.

DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: Your first journey to the city, in pursuit of a new home and fortune, is doubtless retained among your most interesting recollections. Scenes were flitting before your mental vision, as new and transient as aspects of the landscape, varying in rapid succession, with the direction and speed of the stage, the car, or steamboat, that was hurrying you to a new destiny. The near approach to the place of your future abode was at length announced; and looking from the window of the stage as it rose an eminence, or from the

car or steamboat, as it wound round a hill or forest, or turned a point in the river or bay, you obtained the first glimpse of some lofty dome or spire, or elevated section of the town, peering out in distinctness from its yet undefined extent and monotonous aspect. Soon the whole city is expanded upon your view. Entering its precincts, with strange sights flitting before your eyes, strange sounds falling upon your ears, and strange sensations thrilling your bosoms, you wended your way amid different orders of architectural magnificence and meanness—temples of justice and religion in close proximity to sombre prison walls, alternate sections and squares of princely residences and of squalid habitations of gaunt poverty, idleness, and crime—to a place of temporary or permanent lodgings.

Finding repose from such protracted and unaccustomed excitements, you could hardly realize that you were in a great metropolis. Your imagination had often glowed with undefined visions of magnificence and glory, as in the annals of history and the journals of tourists you had traced the extent, wealth, and splendors of ancient and modern cities; the abodes of sovereigns, senates, and courts; the emporiums of letters; the marts of commerce; and the galleries of arts. Brought thus into local association with all the affluence of wealth, honor, and happiness, only fortune, fame, and pleasure, were seen in the mental perspective, and sanguine hope repelled every doubt of success:—

———“For life itself was new,
And the heart promised what the fancy drew.”

That was a crisis in your life, a turning point of your destiny. The present retains its bias, and the future will receive its character from that period. Trusting that the interests of that crisis are not wholly compromised, and are yet capable of a wiser and more beneficent direction,

we address to you these few lines of affectionate and earnest counsel.

That book of sacred scripture *which* contains the practical wisdom of antiquity, opens its address to the age and promise of youth. An ancient philosopher, also, wishing to render the most important service to his country, devoted himself to the instruction of the youth of her metropolis; regarding the young men of Athens as prospectively the most important class in Greece, and surrounded by circumstances at once of distinguished promise and peril. And all enlightened philanthropists—tracing the germ of human destiny in the incipient formation of character; the elements of the individual, social, and national welfare of a people in the discipline of youth; and the hope of the church and of the state in the promise of the rising generation—will seek the amelioration of human society chiefly by instructing and counselling the young. They will particularly address them in the periods and circumstances of their greatest hope and hazard. The youth of our cities stand upon a special vantage-ground for achieving good or ill, and for weal or woe will soon control the great agencies of human power. They are therefore the objects of the highest hopes and greatest fears of the wise and good—the most exciting spectacle that can be presented to the eye of philanthropy and religion. A voice from Heaven, like that addressed to the prophet, says, “Go speak to that young man.” “Go to him as he resolves to seek his fortune in the city; as he approaches the metropolis with his head teeming with wild fancies, excitements, and hopes; as he enters the enchanted sphere of city life; as he selects his boarding-house, his profession, his mode and place of business; as he determines his companionship, his amusements, and his place of worship. Go, utter in his inexperienced ear those words of wisdom that

have sounded along the eras of revelation, echoed from every page; that have come from the lips of all the wise and good, swelled by the concurrent utterance of successive generations; that have fallen in affectionate accents from the lips of fond and revered parents, and now come with sacred memories from the home of his childhood, or in mournful and persuasive reminiscences from their graves; that have been sternly and authoritatively uttered by his conscience in his purest days, and return with every thought of death and a final judgment. Go, kindly and faithfully point out to him the various perils that surround him; the influences that menace his character; the exalted destiny to which he may rise—the infamous doom to which he may fall.”

1. *The first class of temptations incident to the pursuit of a new home and fortune in the city, arises out of a removal from familiar to new and ever-varying scenes.* Habits of virtue become conformed to one's social relations, secular pursuits, and association with external objects. They are supported by the alliance of the known and familiar; which, like the outposts of a military encampment, cover every avenue to the soul, guarding against the insidious approaches of vice, and summoning the forces of virtue at the least approach of danger.

Even inanimate scenes, familiar from childhood, seem invested with moral power. The fields and hills over which his boyish feet trod; the brook over which he leaped; the beaten path through the wood or the graveyard; the mountain gilded to his vision by the early light of morning; the murmuring waterfall, the leaping cascade, or the rushing cataract; the ocean dashing and roaring at his adventurous feet along a familiar beach; the trees beneath whose shade he played; and the school-

house, and the church where he learned and worshipped—all, by a mysterious association with early life, thought, and education, ally him to the true, the pure, and the good. All familiar sounds blend in sweet and harmonious accents of persuasion to a life of virtue. All familiar objects, memorials of the obligations, temptations, privileges, and rewards of virtuous life, seem to smile upon upright conduct and to frown upon the least transgression.

Severing these accustomed alliances, youth enters upon the strange scenes of the city, its dazzling splendors and bewildering excitements transporting to an unhealthy activity all his susceptible faculties. The protection of former habits is withdrawn, and virtue finds nothing on which to repose. She wends her unaccustomed way amid the strange, the fascinating, and tempting, unaided by the memorials and alliances of the past; and she has little facility for forming associations that might replace her former supports.

Entrance upon city life is not merely one great change, but an introduction to a perpetual succession of changes. Assimilated to the circumstances and tastes of the city, the mind acquires a disrelish for the repose of steady habits, and morbidly craves novelties with their surprises, their winning appeals, and insidious temptations. Places of business, of residence, and of worship, are changed with such facility and frequency, as to prevent the forming of conservative personal and local attachments. No hallowed memories cluster, in daily scenes, around the youthful stranger. The path of life is not indicated to him by familiar waymarks, as to the shepherd or the husbandman, cheering and giving confidence to each successive step; but is like the course of the traveller through the desert. Though thousands are travelling in nearly the same direction, and he have himself passed and repassed

a hundred times in the same general course, the yielding sand and clouds of dust leave no familiar traces. The ways of life are moveable, and the walks and retreats of virtue, are not identified with their accustomed attractions of congenial companionship, pleasing associations, and improving entertainments.

Even the co-ordinate supports of intimate and lasting friendship are but partially allowed. Friendships are too cheap, too easily available, to be greatly valued and sacredly guarded. There is little inducement to forbearance, explanation, and conciliation; if one is alienated, the hand of another has already been proffered. A dozen different circles of acquaintance may have been passed through and abandoned in as many months.

The sentiment of friendship is impaired or worn out. Youth goes armed with a selfish and suspecting neutrality; he reposes confidence in few, is distrustful of all. Recognising no connexion with others in venerable relations and sacred interests, there is nothing in the way of lawless passions; the protection of moral interests is wanting, as would be that of pecuniary possessions in the removal of the laws of property. The barriers of vice are thrown down in every direction, and the strongholds of virtue removed. A course of life opened up through such new and strange associations and perpetually-recurring changes, dissevered from the alliances of the past, the conservative influences of permanent local attachments, and selected and lasting friendships, must be fraught with innumerable temptations and perils to the young.

Allow not, then, that love of novelty that will enlarge and strengthen these temptations, but rather repress it. Seek as far as possible permanent associations in business, companionship, and in religious worship. Idle curiosity leads not to wisdom and virtue, but to dissipation

and vice. A morbid disposition to hear distinguished preachers and see new chapels, ministers not to the purpose of the sabbath and of worship ; but fosters religious dissipation, and leads ultimately to the abandonment of all places of worship.

Be not ambitious of the credit of having seen all that the great metropolis contains. The eyes are seldom satisfied with seeing or the ears with hearing till the visitation of disgust and ruin. You had better crawl through the turbid filth of its sewers to gain this credit, than to seek to explore all its hidden abominations. Wise is the youth who tries to see how near he can strike his oar upon the verge of the cataract and escape ; or how near he can leave the mark of his skate to an opening in the ice ; or how far inward he can move upon the circling eddies of the whirlpool to feel the sensation of the motion, and fathom its sounding rocks and yawning vortex ; compared with him whose infatuated curiosity leads him to explore indiscriminately the evil and the good. Rather look at the good, the pure, and the true, and, like Bunyan's pilgrim, putting your fingers in your ears, flee from all scenes of profligacy and dissipation. Avoid the ways of sinners and the seats of the scornful, the instructions of error, the blasphemies of infidelity, the gay circles of dissipating amusements, and insidious temptations ; as far as possible reproduce the alliances and associations of virtue you have left ; maintain the same regular habits ; and let not the surprise of novel temptations and unexpected gusts of passion sweep you away.

2. Another class of temptations to which you are exposed, nearly related to those already mentioned, arises from the want of the conservative influences of home.

The domestic is the original and divinely-appointed order of human society. It embraces in its appropriate

and concentric circles that precise classification of society which is adapted to give scope to natural affections, repress selfish and lawless passions, harmonize the interests and protect the virtues and happiness of the race.

All the properties and laws of Nature are reduced to particular relations and combinations adapted to subserve her own beneficent economy. Any disturbance of these relations produces commensurate evils; while any new combination might explode the earth to fragments, resolve its elements into chaos, and set the heavens on fire as a scroll. So in family circles and associations, all the social elements are reduced to their most auspicious and conservative relations. The virtue of each becomes the interest of the whole, and all are armed against the incursion of lawless passions and disorganizing vice, as against the invasion of a dreaded foe, by an appeal to their hearths, and fires, and altars, the pure and blessed fellowship of their homes. Any other order of alliances, therefore, superseding this, would as manifestly thwart the beneficent designs of Providence, and jeopard the higher interests of mankind, as the disorganization of churches, or the anarchy of states.

Says President Dwight: "There is nothing in this world which is so venerable as the character of parents; nothing so intimate and endearing as the relation of husband and wife; nothing so tender as that of children; nothing so lovely as that of brothers and sisters." And how sweetly are the united attractions of these relations, cherished in fond reminiscence and virtuous affections, celebrated in verse!—

"The sounds that fall on mortal ear
As dewdrops pure at even,
That sooth the breast or start the tear,
Are mother, home, and heaven."

And again, in varied expression:—

"I ne'er shall forget thee,
Blessed home of my heart!
The fond recollections
Thou bringest to me
Of endearing affections,
Shall bind me to thee." —

Though, like the various beneficent and potential agencies of Nature, no passing account may be taken of this silent, varied, and extensive influence of home upon virtuous affections —

"Yet like some sweet, beguiling melody,
So sweet we know not we are listening to it,
Thou the meanwhile art blending with my thoughts,
Yea, with my life, and life's own secret joy."

Domestic influences penetrate the soul, unfold and cherish all its amiable virtues and lovely graces, as the sunlight, bland air, and genial influences of the morning open the rosebuds and early flowers. More than any other influences, they win upon the waywardness and insubordination of youth, and restrain from incipient steps, or reclaim from the advanced progress of vice. When tempted to seek some doubtful amusement or companionship, their influences may dissolve the enchantment. When actually resolved upon, some act of adventurous depravity, some alliance of dissipation and profligacy, they may break the fatal infatuation, and reassure conscience. All dark thoughts, that harass and soil the mind, amid the temptations of business and worldly associates, are dissipated by the light of home.

Images of parental authority and kindness impressed upon the mind by daily association, attend his path, beset with temptations, as guardian-angels. The fond mother watches over his path, encouraging and rewarding every virtue with her complaisant and affectionate smile, forgiving with incomparable charity every deprecated evil, and with sad and regretful look reproving every allowed fault. The wise father observes with ex-

ulting admiration every mark of developing genius and virtue, or with intense solicitude every unfavorable token of character; and with gentleness, authority, and affection, imposes his hand upon his head, and drops the warm tear on his brow, as he administers counsel and reproof, or supplicates the pardon and blessing of Heaven.

Thus virtue nestles and grows under the brooding wing of parental care, till plumed to soar in lofty and sustained flight. But tempted too soon abroad to essay the rapid and precarious flight of life, and buffet its storms, her unaccustomed wing falters with unequal and remitted effort, and she sinks from her lofty aim and native impulse to the degrading level and grovelling pursuits of vice, and is seldom able to regain her true elevation and resume her destined course.

Youth, embowered in the shady and genial retreat of home, is sheltered from the unfriendly influences of the world, as the graceful undergrowth of the forest from sultry heats and blasts of the tempest, by the stately pines and broad-armed oaks. While the forest above is withered and paled; ancient trees are stripped of their giant branches, or rocked in their beds, and precipitated from exposed summits; the pliant sapling, still green and fresh, gently waving to the gale that sweeps so fiercely above, loses not a branch, or twig, or leaf—but striking its roots deeper, and grasping with multiplying fibres an ampler extent of soil, is preparing to rear its head against the storm and defy the elements, when in the course of Nature the protection of the parent-forest is removed. So youth, sheltered beneath the protection of home from the withering heats and incursive blasts of temptation, strikes the roots of virtue deeper, with gradual and attempered trials, till in due course prepared to endure the vicissitudes and exposures of life; and premature removal from these protecting influences is as unnatural and

likely to be as fatal as to remove the sapling from the shielding forest, and transplant it, with mutilated roots and in an uncongenial soil, upon an exposed hillside.

Such is the exposure of every young man coming from remote parts of the country to the city to learn a business, perfect himself in a profession, or to gain or improve a fortune. Surrounded by new and innumerable temptations, no boarding-house, with the most select associations and guardianship, could supply the conservative influences he has left. But with his first scanty income, he can avail himself only of the poorest accommodations of an unattractive and crowded house. No quiet chamber is allowed for retirement and study; no neat parlor, free from the interruptions of noise and the intrusion of uncongenial persons, attracts him by its select companionship, collection of useful books, and choice cabinet.

Discontented and repelled from this poor substitute for a home, after his evening meal, he may read the following, or some similar advertisement in the paper: "Citizens and strangers wishing to spend an hour comfortably, in a quiet and beautifully-furnished retreat, where the best of liquors, wines, and segars, are offered, and where they can have access to all the papers of the day, besides the English and American pictorials, are respectfully solicited to drop in at No. —, — street." Or he may go out by invitation of some fellow-boarder; or stroll abroad in quest of a more congenial resort. On almost every corner, some saloon brilliantly lighted, opens its attractive portals. It is furnished on a scale of the richest luxury, with splendid mirrors, costly divans, easy lounges, and tables covered with late journals and pictorial works. Paintings of great artistic merit, arranged upon the walls, and exhibiting the nude and seductive forms of female beauty, appeal to the ardent passions

of youth ; and corresponding music in sweetest strains steals upon his senses. Often, to add to the attractions of these places, varying entertainments, of the buffoon, danseuse, and the ballad-singer, are furnished. Captivated by such scenes, unsuspecting youth repeats his visits, finds out other similar resorts, and finally is in the habit of being abroad every night, and is found at his boarding-house only for his meals and late lodgings. He visits all the distinguished saloons, refectories, bowling-alleys, theatres, gambling-hells, and other abodes of affiliated infamy. No mother waits his return to second, by her solicitous inquiry, the reproofs of conscience ; no father to aid the returning conviction of better counsels, by lessons of experience, or to arrest his incipient course of evil by the timely interposition of yet revered authority ; no sister to recall him from his almost unconscious estrangement from the delicate sympathies of virtue, by her sweet voice and winning smile.

Removing these restraints from the impetuosity of youth entering a large city, is like taking off the brake from a train of cars at the summit of an inclined plane, leaving them to move with dangerous and constantly-accelerating velocity ; and thousands under this motive-power, unrestrained, renouncing every virtue before observed, and pursuing every vice before deprecated, rush precipitately to destruction. Severing this last bond that holds the bark of youth to its moorings in the harbor of virtue and peace, is like parting the cable of the noble vessel, already careening and bounding before the storm, and allowing it to dart away, like a race-horse, before the gale, without pilot, or compass, to be stranded and wrecked in hopeless ruin.

O then be entreated to consider your exposed situation surrounded by so many insidious temptations, and without the necessary defences of virtue. In select com-

panionships replace them as far as you can. Let thoughts of parents, absent, perhaps now in heaven, keep you back from the devious paths of sin. When vacillating between claims of duty and temptation, let the thought of a departed mother, who once reproved your childish follies, and forgave them, and commended you to virtue and to God—the memory of her serene, affectionate, and regretful countenance—recall the purpose and inspire the courage of virtue. One of the finest and bravest of the officers who have lately fallen upon the embattled plains of Mexico, and one that obtained early and distinguished promotion, while a cadet at West Point, being importuned by a high-spirited and reckless companion to drink with him the enchanted cup, and chided for his cowardly refusal, simply replied, “My mother would not wish me to.”

“Oh! in our sterner manhood, when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way;
When girt with sin, and sorrow, and the toil
Of cares, which tear the bosom that they soil—
Oh! if there be in Retrospection’s chain
One link that binds us to duty again,
It is the memory of a mother’s love.”

He that hallows such reminiscences, confirms one of the strongest bonds of a virtuous life; he that hath not home virtues in his soul, and is not moved by the sweet concord of domestic affections, is “fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.”

3. *Another class of the temptations of large cities arises from a prevailing over-estimate of wealth, and fraudulent methods of business.* Cities are the exchanges of nations, the markets of the world. The countless multitudes of merchants, clerks, and porters, passing and repassing to ships, customhouses, countinghouses, and exchanges, continually remind us of the numbers, and ascendancy of the

mercantile class. Commercial influences must therefore to a great extent affect the social and moral character of a city. They tend to foster an idolatrous and corrupting estimate of wealth, and to subordinate the higher ends of intellectual and moral culture, domestic virtues and happiness, to its acquisition.

If the worship of the world in the devotement of supreme regards, could have been symbolized, at different periods, we should at one time behold man offering supreme homage to Mars; at another, to Minerva, Apollo, or Ceres; at another, to Venus or Bacchus; and at another, to Mammon. In a fair representation of the present comparative homage of the world, the altars of Mammon would be found to outnumber and surpass in splendor all others. Its temples are reared and its magnificent and imposing ceremonial worship is enacted in the city. Thither the tribes of the people go up in the engrossing pursuits of wealth, like the ancient Hebrews to Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Asia to Ephesus, to pay their homage, participate in the solemnities, and join in the idolatrous shouts going up before this gilded divinity whom now all Europe and America worshippeth. From the altar of Mammon, a votary goes away, bearing, as indelibly if not as conspicuously, the marks of the shrine at which he has bowed, as from the altar of Bacchus. The delusion may not surprise him into as many vulgar improprieties, but may fascinate him imperceptibly into as many fatal errors, downright follies, and heinous crimes. The intoxication may not be as violent, neither is it as intermittent; it is incorporated more completely into the habit of the soul, and allows fewer intervals for sober reflection and escape. From a regard for money as a means to the advantages of life, such a votary passes to a strange and infatuated idolatry for the thing itself; not merely

in disproportion to, but without regard to its uses, even better pleased with accumulated investments, without the prospect or even possibility of ever using them; as if

“The chief end of man
Is to keep what he’s got,
And get what he can.”

Intellectual imbecility, elevated to distinction by wealth, puts on affected airs, prates ignorance, and uses insolence with impunity and even applause. Dark fraud occupies princely habitations, rides in rich livery, and by gold wins its way to any circle and social advantages. Impudent vice, shielded by the immunities of wealth, shines in the elegant attire and circles of fashionable life, repelling the inquisitiveness and scorning the censures of virtue. All eminent advantages and distinctions appear to be conferred by riches, and society seems to be framed upon the principle of its supreme control. By observation, contagious example, and the assimilating influence of daily pursuits, youth is taught to ascertain the value of all things—health, intelligence, talents, and even virtue—upon the list of prices current; and to prize acquisitions and occasions as they may be converted into gold.

As money is a representative of all advantages, and answers almost all purposes—procuring fame, appeasing conscience, and atoning for crime, or defying its punishment—he impeceptibly becomes willing to subordinate all claims to its attainment, and to pursue it by the most *available* means, with little or no scruple as to their character. Many make it the supreme end; and others, ranking it too high, repress proportionably nobler sentiments and pursuits; preclude the most exalted fellowship and happiness of life; and obscure the hopes of immortal blessedness.

Avoid this over-estimate of wealth. Your life—its

length, its happiness, its usefulness, its honorable fame — does not depend upon the *abundance* of the things you possess. Let not its pursuit repress nobler aims, soil your character, destroy your virtue, and degrade your soul to an infamous baseness.

Amid this class of temptations, there is a still greater liability that your virtue will become impaired and your character tarnished by the vices of trade. The exchanges of the country are so limited, and their laws so simple and well-defined, as to preclude, to a great extent, opportunities or temptations to dishonesty. The exchanges of the city on the other hand, are so extensive, their forms and circumstances so various, and their relations so intricate and subtle, as ever to present new modes, opportunities, and formidable temptations to fraud. It is there we hear, as one of the most familiar sounds, the buyer exclaiming: “It is naught, it is naught;” depreciating the merchandise he is purchasing; and straightway, as vender, “making his boast” in extravagant and sometimes untruthful commendation of the same wares. Intense and universal competition — taxing industry, perseverance, prudence, shrewdness, and enterprise — continually impels to the arts of deceit and cunning, to improbity and fraud. The conscience is perpetually plied with plausible temptations; and instances of its violation are multiplied, till it becomes insensate, and its transgressions are viewed with indifference or palliation. Questions of custom and expediency supersede those of right, and the immutable laws of integrity are modified to the existing modes of business and to public sentiment. Honesty no longer appears so rigid, nor veracity so unprevaricating a virtue, as it once did. The bold and prominent distinctions of right and wrong so shade into each other and fade away, as to impair the hold of vir-

tue upon the mind, alleviate the pressure of obligation, and facilitate general demoralization.

By such influences young men are liable to be precipitated to lower and yet lower arts of cunning and deceit; availing themselves of false measures, false weights, and innumerable modes of dishonesty—till their characters, formed in this routine and friction of commercial frauds, “like pebbles in a brook, are rounded into a smooth uniformity, in which all the points and angles of a virtuous singularity are lost.”

They are afore prepared to become, by tempting occasions, fraudulent clerks, agents, or partners; defaulters in corporate and public offices; or common thieves, counterfeiters, forgers, or burglars: for conscience, betrayed at one point, is weakened at all. The habitual violation of one law renders easy and almost necessary the violation of others.

Thus demoralization flows into a city through the channels of commerce, and through them also flows back over the country, assimilating all affiliated professions and pursuits to the same standard of morals, menacing the foundations of public virtue and the faith of states. For what can theories of morals and religious professions avail, when the public conscience is despoiled of its sensitiveness to the distinctions of right and wrong, and its barriers against vice are removed? As the rain-drops, trickling down the crevices of the mountain, loosen its adamantine bonds, and at length cleave down in a train of ruin to the plain, great masses that had defied the effacing hand of human power, the innovations of time, and the storms of centuries; so the hidden influences of fraud, perverting the conscience, insidiously loose the foundations of civil institutions, and hasten the overthrow of cities and the downfall of empires.

You must have been sensible of the operation of these

influences upon yourself. Surprised and revolted at successive disclosures of new and more daring frauds, you have been ready to doubt all men, and trust no one; and as confidence in others was diminished, a sense of your own obligations was weakened. Seeing innumerable wrecks of virtue swept from the positions you now occupy, by these furtive and powerful currents, you have been almost ready to abandon yourself to be hurried along the torrent that is bearing so many unresisting to perdition. You have felt the supports of virtue giving way, and the pressure of the waters rising higher and higher against you, threatening every moment to remove you from your balanced position. Watch, then, against these insidious influences. If you have progressed undiscovered along the course of speculation, fraud, and the insensation of conscience, earnestly strive, before it is too late, to regain that standing point of virtue—a good conscience. Part with its peace, its fellowship, its joy, its protection, for commercial advantages, and you part with gold for trash, you sell your birthright for a mess of pottage.

Avoid the incipient violations of conscience, the alliances of iniquitous trade, and the associations of unprincipled and dishonest men. Never borrow of your employer the smallest sum without leave; if you borrow without liberty, you may steal; if you take a penny, you may a pound; if you defraud *for* your employer, you may defraud *him*; and if you deceive or equivocate for another, you may for yourself. A loan for sums to procure an article of dress, or attend a place of amusement, intended as an anticipation of a salary perhaps due in a few weeks, is often the precursor of stupendous frauds, scheming villanies, and utter and hopeless ruin. However adroitly and secretly you may carry on fraud, sooner or later you will be confounded and covered with shame by its discovery. That adept in villanies who could swin-

dle from shrewd merchants, statesmen, and lords, after unavailing attempts to escape, emaciated, broken in spirit, and reduced toward idiocy by debasing habits, died as a fool dieth in Sing-Sing. Lately a young man in a neighboring city escaped with a large sum from the bank in which he was employed, and crossed the ocean, and sought to conceal himself in England and in France under an assumed name; but was arrested and brought back to deplore the loss of character that can never be recovered. So, sooner or later, will all deviations from probity end.

Avoid also the occasions of fraud—extravagance in dress, expensive amusements and habits, and all associations that require more means than you can honestly command, and which may tempt you to anticipate your salary in borrowing of a friend or your employer. Approach not a gambling-board, and venture not upon rash speculation to acquire fortune without patient industry and labor. These exigencies search the weakness of principle. And having crossed the line of dishonesty, a man has virtually fallen: unfaithful in the least, he only waits the occasion to be unfaithful in much. By the yielding of conscience, the whole structure of virtuous character will sooner or later be precipitated to its downfall, as a stately edifice or temple by the yielding or decay of its foundation.

Though the trial by gold is more searching and more fatal than the old trial by fire, you may come out unscathed. How grateful to oppressed virtue the following memorial of the unstained character of a distinguished merchant, lately deceased, after a trial of more than forty years, in this city:—

“Resolved, That the chamber of commerce and merchants of New York, representing the unanimous sense of their body, record the death of JONATHAN GOODHUE, now no more of earth, with the sincerest grief, and with the highest respect for his virtues.

“Resolved, That as a merchant, his enterprise, his systematic attention to business, his unvarying good faith and fidelity, his unspotted honor, and his unstained integrity, entitle him to a lasting good name in the commercial annals of our country.

“Resolved, That we equally declare our high esteem for his virtues as a man—for his kindness of heart—his liberality in useful public enterprises, and his activity in works of charity—for his modesty—and also for his elevated Christian spirit, and for the unostentatious simplicity and blameless purity of his private life.”

You, like him, may falsify the maxim that every man has his price. And a man that maintains his integrity through the sore trials of mercantile life, is one of the most distinguished ornaments and benefactors of the race. Virtue that has never been tried may be spurious; enduring this test, its genuineness is unquestionable.

4. *Another class of temptations arises from innumerable and ever-present examples of wickedness, in apparent impunity and triumph.*

Man is universally an imitative being; and this tendency is greatest in youth, and only gradually diminished by advancing age. Hence the facility with which children are assimilated to the tastes and habits of parents, and whole communities to the successive and ever-varying standards of fashion. This susceptibility to the influence of example, increased by the according bias of depravity, and appeals of passion, is addressed by a twofold, corrupting exemplification of wickedness.

The first is individual, and is invested with all the assimilating power of companionship, or attractions of personal fortune, rank, and prosperity. A fellow-boarder or clerk is admired, almost envied, by an inexperienced and virtuous youth, for his fine personal appearance and dress, his knowledge of business and the world, his brilliant circles of acquaintance, his large salary and prospects of wealth. At length, with a sudden shock to his virtue, that model youth is discovered to be a desecrator of the sabbath, a

contemner of veracity, of temperance, of purity, and of all religion.

Or in some casual acquaintance—an employer, or some man of high social or political standing—the habits of vice are disclosed. Surely if these habits are compatible with such fortunate conditions of life; if they do not at all prejudice reputation, social standing, civil promotion, commercial prosperity, and all the gayety and cheer of life, they can not be very bad. They can not be very disreputable or unsafe, or such reputable, and wise, and provident men, would not allow them. He suspects himself of credulity and superstition, smiles at his former ignorance of the world and fastidiousness of conscience. Through such examples, and the direct solicitude and chidings of those older or more experienced, with some hesitation and reproofs of conscience, he resolves no longer to be singular, and enters upon a more *liberal* course of life, doing as others do, and if need be hazarding what others hazard.

As one or two children of precocious depravity, by the contagious sympathy of example, lead a whole company of playmates into mischief, where alone none of the rest would have transgressed; or as a company of young men are betrayed into improprieties or immoralities by the challenging example of one more reckless than the rest—so in their respective circles the multitudes of a city are precipitated in evil courses. Inexperienced and timid youth enter upon questionable and immoral courses, surrounded and cheered on by companions; and having learned to distrust the virtue of others, they gradually surrender their own.

There is also a social exemplification of wickedness, scarcely less corrupting, not identified with individuals, but the community. In a city, sin is made familiar in allowed customs, modes of business, and amusement, of

complex moral character ; and is exhibited to all in simpler forms, in a magnitude of proportions and fullness of details that it can be nowhere else. From the social character of vice, scarcely existing in solitude, its facilities for development and corrupting attractions extend with an extending population ; furnishing the resources in numbers, tastes, and circumstances, for the most effective and conspicuous organization ; and enabling and tempting men to be more wicked than the same population could be scattered, in sparse communities. Every vice, in organized and portentous exemplification, towers in conspicuous and attractive elevation, before the eyes of all ; and like a monument rising from an eminence over a vast population, it not only arrests the attention of individuals with greater facility, but the assimilating and corrupting observation of one does not restrict the vision of others. Thousands are corrupted by the same exhibitions of vice, more effectively and constantly represented, and attracting the assimilating observation of larger numbers. Whichever way you turn, vice is before you, offending the eye, sounding harshly upon the ear, and disturbing the sensibilities of the heart ; till by an obvious and general law the mind loses a sense of its odiousness. As, by a long familiarity with suffering, the heart is liable to become hardened — so, by a long familiarity with sin, the virtuous sensibilities are blunted. The prevalence of war, with its ensigns before the people perpetually, in any age or country, diminishes a sense of its sinfulness and evils. Where duelling is commonly resorted to, to settle personal disputes, its guilt is almost lost sight of. Where the law of marriage is set aside, its violation is regarded as a venial or no offence at all. So imperceptible but far-reaching is the demoralizing influence of prevailing examples of wickedness in larger communities.

The philosophy of the poet is as applicable to communities and classes as to individuals :—

“Vice is a monster of such horrid mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We soon endure, then pity, then embrace.”

Not only is a horror of sin abated, but confidence in the moral government of God is impaired. The feet of inexperienced Youth well-nigh slip; he envies the foolish, having no bands in their death; not being in trouble, or exercise of self-denial, like other men; having all the advantages of life, and spreading themselves like a green bay-tree. “Truly,” he says within himself, “religion is of no advantage; I have washed my hands in innocency, restrained my passions, and regarded the rights of others, in vain: I am less prospered than the wicked.” Thus temptation, from the difficulty of tracing and distinguishing the consequences of sin, is greatly enhanced. Those seen successful, triumphant, and happy, are not identified in the subsequent stages of their progress to perdition. They are like a player personating successively different characters, not identified as the same man. The man we meet, handcuffed and led to prison, does not appear to be the man we saw the day before, mirthful over the wine-board. The man we see in the ward of the prison, with his striped jacket, does not seem like the man who a week before was seen in the best seat in the theatre, shouting enthusiastically to the progress of the play. The man that we see ridding himself of the burden of a miserable existence by suicide, or expiating his crimes upon the gallows, is not recognised as the man who just now was boasting impunity in scheming frauds, or in the destruction of the virtue of the innocent, and the invasion of the peace of families. The man deserted on his death-bed, in despair crying for mercy, or wandering in mental

alienation, is not identified as the man who had been heard blaspheming the name of God, and imprecating curses upon his fellow-men. The slippery places upon which the wicked stand, ready to fall into perdition, are by the spell of the world veiled from our sight, and we are left to admire and envy, when we ought to abhor and pity. As youth admires and envies, he is ready to imitate; and as by equivocal paths he reaches the course of the wicked, it opens before him a broad and beaten path: he traces the footprints of thousands before him, and hears the sound of their myriad footfalls, and their voices cheering him on; and where he would not venture alone, he follows a multitude to do evil.

But remember, the numbers associated in an evil course do not render it more proper, nor diminish its guilt and punishment. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." By select companionship, repression of idle curiosity, and laudable and improving engagements, you may escape these influences to a considerable extent, as one would avoid a place of contagious disease, or exposure to the night air. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." In the progress of your social life, walk not in the counsel of the ungodly; but rather defer to the opinions and precedents of those who fear God. Visit not the resorts of trifling and profane men; and hasten away from the clubs and companionship of scoffers and libertines as you would flee the presence of fiends.

5. Another class of temptations arises from innumerable direct and concentrated appeals to evil propensities.

Susceptibility to the influence of temptation is increased by the prevailing excitements of city life. The phlegmatic are aroused to a strange and unwonted ac-

tivity; and the ardent consumed by the intensity of their desires. The mingling heat of ever-glowing passions seems almost to develop itself in spontaneous combustion; and the least friction of depraved example or appeal may kindle and consume the noblest structure of character, with its stately order, magnificent proportions, and rich mental furniture. After all undue passionate excitements, there is an enfeebled reaction and exposed weakness, which invites the appeals of temptation.

Not only does this explosive intensity of passion, fostered by artificial excitements, render all more susceptible to evil influences; but there are vast and endlessly-diversified combinations and incentives to vice, in direct appeals to every particular susceptibility. No corner of the heart is unpenetrated by temptation; no depravity, or passion, or prejudice, remains latent for want of occasions of development. The traces of original character or early education are drawn out to conspicuous prominence, as the invisible lines of indelible ink upon canvass when spread to the fire.

A feeling of intellectual independence or an undue love of speculation is addressed by the publications and insinuating advocates of a thousand errors. Errors that in the country, without association or organization, speedily become extinct or inoperative, here have their preachers, organs, and conventicles. The faith of a young man is already disturbed by practical neglect of religion, ignorance of its evidences, protracted vagrancy of religious reflections, or by incipient habits of vice. By special invitation he hears some new apostle of error, some philosophical lecturer, examines some plausible book or tract, or is captivated by the conversation of a friend, or fellow-boarder, or clerk, who has examined the latest theory or heard its champion. His faith in the religion of his fathers is disturbed. (Giving up the habit of attending any par-

ticular place of worship, he gradually neglects attending anywhere. He enters such a course of life as diverts him more and more from proper habits, and ultimately from a religious profession and life. What might have remained an inoperative doubt amid the scenes of home and rural life, is developed in avowed, and proselyting, and practical infidelity.

A love of the excitement of games of hazard and chance is met by all the available modes of gambling—from the billiard-saloon, with the hazard of the price of the game, or the next bottle of wine, to the dark and silent gambling-hell, where thousands change hands in an evening. In guarded, but understood language, their advertisements are in the journals; and their emissaries are abroad, to entrap the unwary, and multiply patrons and victims. The splendid entertainment, abundance of wine, elegant apartments, polite and attentive host, select company, and full bank, fascinate the young adventurer. The excitement of the game itself, greatly increased by the hazard and hope of gain, often transports to a recklessness bordering on desperation. Everything is staked; loans are made, or funds obtained under false pretences; and at length frauds are committed.

A passion that might never be discovered in a small community, is here developed, enslaving and ruining its unsuspecting votary. He follows up the sinful waste of time: all good habits are abandoned; all vice is springing up as in a hot-bed. If he gain by gambling and lotteries, he has lost the habits and virtue that might enable him to keep it or put it to any valuable use. From the fullest investigations in all our cities, from able and well-authenticated reports, the gambler sooner or later loses character fortune, and happiness, and goes to his grave covered with infamy. Prizes from the lottery or gambling-board are usually passports to perdition.

Taste for dress is appealed to almost weekly by a new table of fashions. A vain young man from the country soon becomes ashamed of his ill-fitting or partially-worn garments, and imagines that true manliness and social standing depend upon the fit of his coat, the style of his hat, or the shape of his boots. The whole of a small salary, not required for his board-bill, and often what is due and has been promised for that, is spent with increasing recklessness upon the decoration of his person. It is an event of perhaps weekly occurrence in this city, that young men are betrayed into a course of dishonesty by this weakness; and an observed disparity between a style of dress and salary generally awakens suspicions of virtue.

Undue relish for the luxuries of the table is catered to by the productions of all climes served upon the most approved methods of the culinary art, and at all hours of the night and day. "Restaurants," "cafés," "refectories," and "oyster-saloons," in every grade of meanness or respectability and splendor, are found on almost every corner of the streets. The young man passes twenty in going from his lodgings to his business; and one perhaps is opened at the next door, or in the same building in which he is employed. Visiting this occasionally, the plainer fare of the boarding-house becomes insipid; he pampers his appetite by frequent and irregular visits; and at length he becomes a miserable dyspeptic, a besotted epicure, and is devoted to all sensual excesses:—

"'Tis the inferior appetites enthrall
The man, and quench the immortal light within him;
The senses take the soul an easy prey,
And sink the imprisoned spirit into brute."

Appetite for ardent spirits is appealed to from scores of splendid saloons and low porter-houses. The devotee of the cup has no trouble, as in the country, to keep his

sideboard supplied with the choicest liquors. They are sold in a hundred places within as many rods, and he can, by turning a corner, or walking a few blocks, replenish his stores or obtain a single glass. These places, made attractive by fine paintings, music, and diversified entertainments of wit, and song, and dance, have introduced so many upon the broad road to ruin, that they are recognised as the porticoes of perdition. Those who often go there, will never return to a life of virtue, and be known among the circles of the wise and good.

Hundreds of abodes of infamy are opened throughout the city, appealing to another class of passions; their hired emissaries are abroad in the city and country, to decoy the unwary and the friendless. Directories and cards are secretly distributed in offices, places of business, and to strangers as they reach the city. Placards along the streets, and advertisements in the journals, assure the passionate and adventurous youth that crime and villany may be pursued at reduced hazards. And fascinating but fallen women wait at the corners of the streets, and with honeyed words make the overtures of damning sin. A young man void of understanding follows to the chambers of death. As the leprosy of this vice touches his character, all virtues forsake and all vices enter the soul:—

“Fugiunt pudor, verumque, fidesque;
In quorum subeunt locum, fraudes, dolique, insidiaeque.”

He shall wear the scars upon his soul as a man maimed by the loss of limb or eye, or deep gash upon his body, to the grave. No atonement can remove the temporal consequences; they will follow and beset his path, darken his destiny, and still poise heavier bolts of wrath at his guilty head. His careless levity shall be superseded by remorse and anguish, and—

———“fierce Repentance real
Her snaky crest; and quick-returning pangs
Shoot through the conscious heart.”

From the dark hour of penitential anguish, crying to Heaven for the pardon of his sins; or from the bitter experience of impaired domestic confidence and fellowship, and awakened jealousy, banishing peace and happiness from the domestic hearth; or from a remorseful deathbed, haunted by the memory of follies and crimes, and unatoned wrongs inflicted upon the innocent, or perpetuated and sealed upon the fallen, and of the suffering of bleeding kindred hearts; or from the judgment when the heavens shall reveal his concealed profligacies seen by myriads of bright eyes shining from their canopy, and the earth speaking from her every unsuspected retreat, and every chamber of darkness shall rise up against him and accuse him; he will view his infatuation in bartering true temporal and eternal well-being—the approbation of earth and Heaven—the delusive pleasures of sin, with amazement and unutterable anguish.

6. *Another class of temptations arises in large communities from the ready concealment of character and conduct.* A person is recognised when standing in a field or highway alone, or surrounded by a few individuals; but is unobserved in the crowded thoroughfares, markets, or exchanges of the city, though jostled by a thousand elbows, and seen by a thousand eyes; as among the myriad pebbles on the seashore, or leaves of the forest, a single one is scarcely distinguished.

A moral twilight rests with ample folds over a city, so that character and conduct that would be known and marked in a sparse community, pass undistinguished and are often unknown in the most limited circle of daily association. Multitudes walk under various disguises of concealment or hypocrisy; hiding themselves from

their kindred and their race, from their shame and deserved punishment. Cities are the world's chambers of darkness—its assignation places of wickedness and crime. The depraved and the designing flock to them from every part of the land and the globe, to consummate and practise their villanies unknown and unsuspected. Often they pass as distinguished gentlemen, with civic or military titles, bearing honorable letters of commendation, lodging at the best hotels, and insinuating themselves into the best families and social circles. They appear in public places, and promenade the streets with airs and dress of the highest standing, undistinguished while concerting plans of robbery and villany, and in open day marking the houses they will rob or burn, and the victims they will defraud or betray. Concealed from the eye of the law and of public sentiment, they prosecute their infernal schemes, diffusing vice and crime far and near, like the mud-monsters of the ocean diving into its miry beds, and stirring up all the filthy sediment accumulated there by the deposits of centuries, and discoloring the sea far around by their ponderous but concealed movements. In the country, the approach of evil is like that of a murderer in an open field: the approach is seen, and the blow may be parried. In the city, it is insidious, like the attack of an assassin at night, or lurking in ambush: the thrusts and passes are unseen and unparried, and the shots startle only as they wound.

Others, from the adjacent country and more distant towns, known as reputable citizens, upon the pretence of paying a visit to relatives, or some mission of business, resort to the city to indulge in a period of moral abandonment and dissipation. If the light of scrutinizing observation could suddenly pervade the city as it does the sparse settlements of the country, how many would be disturbed and driven from the concealed haunts

of vice, as bats from their retreats when the light of day is let in upon them by tearing down dilapidated buildings!

The same circumstances that conceal the deeds of monsters of iniquity and other hypocrites, facilitate and abet all incipient vice or fraud. By abating the feeling of necessary accountability to fellow-men, they remove an essential condition of virtue. Man was formed to be answerable to his parents, to his superiors in judgment, and to the public sentiment; and he walks before them with a more sensible circumspection than before the Divine Omniscience. Next to the fear of God, this regard for the opinions of friends and fellow-men is adapted to repress sin and foster virtue.

In the exposed life of sparse communities, this principle operates with its legitimate force; habits become generally known; public sentiment acts with facility and pointed discrimination; and the character can not easily rise above the moral elevation of the life. But in the city, a man may escape this amenable relation. Public censure—feeble enough when unembarrassed amid the obvious characters and relations of rural life—is comparatively impotent in a great community, from a want of power of discrimination and concentration. We can no more direct it steadily and effectively against individual sinners, through the disguises and moveable relations of city life, than concentrate the rays of the sun through a lens perpetually disturbed by tremulous and irregular motions, so as to kindle a combustible substance. There is always sufficient apparently respectable companionship to gainsay and reverse its more righteous decisions—to shield the wicked man from the uncertain though indignant rebukes of virtue. A large portion of this reputable companionship, ignorant of real character and crimes, by recognising him on 'change or in the family circle, endorse his character; and others,

knowing his real character, are yet coerced to passing respect, from his standing before the community, and his alliance with truly virtuous persons. Thus, by changing names, boarding-houses, employers, associations, and manner of dress, he may with apparent impunity for a long period triumph over law and public sentiment, and continue to share the reputation and temporal advantages of virtue.

As the consequences of sin are seldom immediately developed, or recognised as a visitation of punishment, they are not feared by those whose faith looks not beyond human tribunals and the grave. In a natural atheism, youth has already said, "God does not see through the dark—he does not know." If, now, his sabbath desecration, frauds, and profligacy, are unknown to parents, and to all he respects or loves, and he suffers nothing in his reputation and social standing by pursuing them, all effectual restraints are removed. Thus all errors, vices, and frauds, progress unknown and unrebuked, till they are matured in apostates and monsters of depravity.

A young gentleman of one of the southern states—of distinguished connexions, placed in this city as a member of one of our literary institutions, and under the care of a religious family—concealed his dissolute habits to such an extent, that his father hardly suspected his evil course till near the close of the proposed term of his residence at the north, when it appeared that he had expended about twelve thousand dollars in the circles of dissipation; had been reduced to a condition of extreme profligacy and wretchedness; and been prevented from committing suicide only by the timely interference of his landlord to loosen the fatal knot already adjusted to his neck. Now all this was known to none or few in the city for whom this abandoned youth particularly cared, and will scarcely affect his reputation in his

native state, and among his honorable family connexions. The most they may ever know is, that their spirited nephew or cousin was a little wild, rather gay, and spent too much money while in New York.

Such concealment and impunity are promised to all classes, to every sinful propensity, increasing the power of every temptation, and giving new impulse to evil passion and purpose. In its disguised activity, gayety, and unrestrained license, a city is one vast masquerade entertainment. Through its spacious avenues, gardens, and parks—its splendid saloons and halls of amusement—thronging multitudes pass and repass, unknowing and unknown, like those in the gay dance; and often the attitudes, airs, and looks assumed, exhibit a degree of wantonness, or want of circumspection, that are preliminary to, and abet every course of vice. They are reduced to the delusion of a twofold atheism: the darkness of depravity removes a restraining sense of the Divine presence; the concealment of city life, of the presence and fear of fellow-men.

Against this array of influences, nothing can save you but virtue enshrined in your hearts—a deep and abiding conviction of God's omniscience—that he sees through the dark cloud, the shadows of the night, the concealments of bolts and bars, and complicated precautions—and that soon every secret fault, as well as public act, shall meet the fearful award of a final judgment.

Thus tempting and hostile influences hover over the crowded thoroughfares of city life in myriad invisible forms, as the legions of spiritual forces discovered to the eyes of the prophet over the mountains of Israel. They infest the path of youth, as sharks follow a navy, or ravens an army before a battle. They sometimes transform themselves into angels of light; and vice is present-

ed in the garb of innocence, and invested with adventitious charms. It dazzles through the eye in voluptuous aspects; charms and captivates through the ear in soft strains of music; woos through the gorgeous images of the imagination; entices through engaging companionship; and wins and allures by fashion.

The incitements of passion are always present; the objects of passion always available; and the concealments of transgression always ready—imparting to all temptations inconceivable facilities, address, and power. From their formidable character, it is amazing that so many parents in the country are willing to subject their sons to them, and that so many young men eagerly and lightly rush into their midst. Considering the eagerness of competitors, the small number that succeed, the vast majority that fail—many of them signally and hopelessly—the thronging population of youth appear as the partners to a game, waiting with intense anxiety and expectation the revolutions of the wheel of fortune in its various, complicated, and subordinate movements. How few are enriched at this bewitching game! how many are beggared of money, character, peace, and hope! And yet the existence of a *brilliant chance*—a *splendid possibility*—fascinates and misleads. One of hundreds of thousands may draw the prize of its greatest affluence and distinction; a few others of the jostling and changing crowd its secondary fortunes; and the rest are doomed to various disappointments. And yet the idea of escaping the drudgery of agricultural or mechanical employments, of obtaining an imaginary elevation in social standing, and the distant but dazzling possibility, attract, delude, and betray tens of thousands.

Says Rev. James Harper, of Scotland, in a lecture to young men: “Somewhere about twenty years ago, six lads, my informant one of the number, natives of one of

the northern counties of England, mutual acquaintances and similarly educated, went to London about the same time, to be employed in different branches of business. One of the five went to the metropolis beloved for his gentle, generous spirit, was remarked by his associates for his religious impressions, and during a length of time was exemplary for his attention to the duties of the sabbath. Jolting on the Lord's day was the first decided step of defection, soon followed by gambling and every evil work ; next came bankruptcy and total destitution ; his life was, last of all, led in the streets ; shunned by his former companions, he grew as callous as he was degraded, and at length sought and found an asylum in a London workhouse, where he died from exhaustion and disease ten days after his admission.

“ Another, of whose serious character as favorable if not higher hopes were entertained, fell before the same temptations, — married, — lived expensively, — ran into debt ; under the pressure of his difficulties robbed a generous master ; fled to America, where he gave himself up to brutal intemperance, and soon died the victim of wretchedness and vice.

“ A third, losing character and subsistence by a similar course, poisoned himself in despair.

“ The fourth was a young man of high talents and cultivated mind, a solicitor by profession, with very flattering prospects. Sabbath-breaking, gaming, intemperance, with their usual train of bankruptcy, marked his course. He died of want, and his famished corpse was found in the night on the steps of a house in Islington.

“ The history of the fifth is a repetition of the tragic tale. Sabbath-profanation was followed by dissipated habits. He committed the crime of seduction ; fled with his victim ; exhausted his means of living ; having reached a town in the north of Scotland, he drank to excess to

drown his misery, and went and shot himself in his bed. 'And here,' said the narrator, 'am I, of the six alone remaining, to tell the story of their fall.' And he ascribed his own preservation, under God, to the alarm which smote him when his early associates first proposed to him to pass part of their Sundays in pleasure, and to the reverence which he sedulously cultivated for the Lord's day and the public ordinances of religion."

It has been estimated that not one in ten attempting business in our large cities, and not one in a hundred commencing as clerks, have succeeded. Their failure has been variously disreputable or ignominious, and often followed by a broken spirit, an indolent, reckless, dissipated, or criminal life, pursued in vagrancy in different parts of the country, and ended in poorhouses and prisons, by suicide, or on the gallows. But few entering this furnace come out pure gold—vessels of honor: many are reduced to dross, to refuse stuff, to be cast out and trodden under foot of society.

A city is a battle-field in life's campaign. Skirmishes with evil, and hostile encounters are inevitable everywhere; but temptations press harder and with more various appliances; and the warfare of human life rises to its intensest moral conflicts in a large community. There virtue is maintained only through conflicts and victories. If triumphant, you will look back upon the first adventures, and subsequent temptations and hazards of city life, as a soldier returned victorious from a long campaign, in which many hard battles have been fought, and many noble comrades have fallen by his side—himself bearing in his scars evidences of desperate encounters and narrow escapes. When rejoicing in the spoils of victory—reviewing the perils and sacrifices through which they have been attained—you may be led to exclaim with Pyrrhus, after a victory over the Romans

which cost him the flower of his army: "Another such victory, and I am undone!" The hazards to mortal life were not greater in the memorable battles of Trafalgar or Waterloo, or in the late severe engagements at Palo Alto, Buena Vista, or Cerro Gordo, than those that continually beset the virtue of young men seeking their home and fortune in cities. They are marked like battle-fields and the march of a retreating and slaughtered army, by the traces of desperate conflicts, and heaps of the slain and the dying. But, girded with the panoply of Christian virtue, *you* may withstand the fiercest assaults, and quench the fiery darts of temptation, and stand erect and unscathed, where multitudes are wounded and falling around you.

A city is the most stormy and dangerous cape that is doubled in the voyage of life: it is swept by tempests, beset with sunken reefs, and strewn with noble wrecks of youth and fortune! How many splendid barks here struggle against adverse currents and winds, waiting for some auspicious breeze to enable them to turn this point and make their destined haven! How many of them will be wrecked without ever entering upon any new road of the sea! How various the fortunes which will attend the voyages of those who now seem moving before prosperous gales! Some will be wrecked on remote shores, or sunk in distant waters.

But, observing the lighthouses that gleam over the dark waters, and point out the safe roads of the sea; marking well the compass, to remind you of the course you are sailing; searching the chart for hidden rocks; standing off from perilous shoals; steering wide of reefs on which hang shattered wrecks; running in upon dangerous shores with ship all manned, wheel in hand, and lead constantly sounding; and casting your anchor when tempests are rising—*you* will outride every storm; with-

stand the currents that would hurry you into the gulf-stream of sinful pleasures, and the eddies that would sink you in the deep waters of infidelity; escape being borne away by the gusts of passion, or swallowed up in the maelstrom of profligacy and ruin; and make safely and prosperously the voyage of life.

Life in a city is the most dangerous portion of its journey. It lies through

———“ a wildering maze,
Where Sin hath tracked ten thousand ways,
Her victims to ensnare;
All broad, and winding, and aslope,
All tempting with perfidious hope,
All ending in despair!” —

and no traveller escapes in safety without vigilantly watching against the perils that lurk on every hand. It is swept by blasts more pestilent than the sirocco, more desolating and terrible than the tornado. A pestiferous atmosphere broods over it, imperceptibly enervating the moral sense, paling the cheek and obstructing the respiration of virtue. It is like some ancient roads lying through marshy regions, where whole armies have perished in concealed bogs. How many thousands enter here and disappear, leaving no memorials to implore the passing tribute of a sigh over their ruin! It is like a mountain-pass, where bones of the slain lie scattered around, and banditti of robbers lurk to destroy the unwary traveller.

But even from the dark mazes and perilous labyrinths of a modern Sodom —

“ One humble path, that never bends,
Narrow, and rough, and steep ascends” —

to the gates of paradise — the path of safety, success, and eternal life! Seek that path while yet the hope and promise of youth remain: —

"Come while the morning of thy life is brightest,
 Thou youthful wanderer in a flowery maze ;
 Come while the restless heart is bounding lightest,
 And Joy's pure sunbeams tremble in thy ways ;
 Come while sweet thoughts like summer buds unfolding
 Waken rich feelings in the careless breast—
 While yet thy hand the ephemeral wreath is holding,
 Come and secure interminable rest.

"Soon will the freshness of thy days be over,
 And thy free buoyancy of spirit flown ;
 Pleasure will fold her wing — and friend and lover
 Will to the embraces of the worm have gone.
 They that now bless thee will have passed for ever ;
 Their looks of kindness will be lost to thee :
 Thou wilt need balm to heal thy spirit's fever,
 As thy sick heart broods over years to be !

'Come while the morning of thy life is glowing,
 Ere the dim phantoms thou art chasing, die—
 Ere the gay spell which earth is round thee throwing,
 Fades like the crimson from a sunset sky.
 Life is but shadows — save a promise given
 Which lights up sorrow with a fadeless ray :
 Oh, touch the sceptre — win a hope in heaven ;
 Come, turn thy spirit from the world away !

"Then will the crosses of this brief existence
 Seem airy nothings to thine ardent soul ;
 And, shining brightly in the forward distance,
 Will of thy patient race appear the goal.
 Home of the weary ! where in peace reposing,
 The spirit lingers in unclouded bliss,
 Though o'er its dust the curtained grave is closing,
 Who would not *early* choose a lot like this ?"

WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK.



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